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## **Shilhouette Update**

### **Preparation Begins for Dressage at Devon: Life is Action Packed for Two-Month Old Pennsylvania-Bred Foal, Shilhouette.**

Devon, PA (July 14, 2011) – Most two or three-month old babies don't do much more than loll around and cry out for Mom. But expectations are higher for the Oldenburg filly, Shilhouette, from Rolling Stone Farm in Slatington, Pennsylvania as she gets ready for summer breed shows culminating in Dressage at Devon, September 27 – October 2. ([www.dressageatdevon.org](http://www.dressageatdevon.org))

Oldenburgs are a horse breed that originates in Germany and the Oldenburg Horse Breeders Society wants to make sure that Shilhouette fits their breeding goal. So on July 29, when she has been in this world for just shy of three months, they will evaluate her breeding, movement, how well she's put together and the overall impression she makes. Then she's off on her first road trip to the Bucks County Horse Park Dressage Sport Horse Breed Show on July 31 followed by the Maplewood Warmbloods Dressage Sport Horse Breed Show on August 5.

Despite her rigorous schedule, like most babies she's spending a lot of time with her mother, Fhlora. She's also hanging out with people, learning to trust them even though they do things that might seem a little odd to her. For example, the second week in July she's getting a new hairdo. She'll be smartened up with a body clip that cuts through the mottled appearance of her half-in, half-out foal coat. This requires barn employees to buzz all over her whole body with horse clippers. While it seems like Shilhouette might object to this, Maurine Swanson who bred Shilhouette says "she might be a little skittish to start with, but then she'll probably settle down like most foals. And she'll be happy once it's done because it's going to be hot."

Shilhouette learns a lot by imitating Fhlora. It didn't take her long to figure out how to supplement her diet of mother's milk with grain. Like most foals at Rolling Stone

Farm, as soon as she was tall enough, she poked her nose into her mother's grain bucket and demanded that they share the meal. Luckily Fhlora is easy going and gave in to Shilhouette. Also, in July Shilhouette will start learning to be lead around at a trot with her Mother; something she needs to do at the upcoming shows so judges can see how she moves.

While some breeders braid their foals' manes for inspection, Rolling Stone Farm doesn't plan to do much to prepare Shilhouette. She's one of twenty four foals at the farm all lined up for inspection on the same day. So practicality wins over vanity. When representatives from the breeding society inspect her, they'll check out her lineage by taking a sample of hair from her tail and doing a DNA analysis. Then they register her, noting any specific markings, look at her to see how she's built, and watch her running in the field with Fhlora to determine if she moves in a rhythmic, balanced and elastic way. Finally the judges decide if she's a 'premium' foal. "It's nice to have the 'premium' recognition, because it means you've got a quality foal," says Swanson, "but you can't get all caught up in it. Foals go through awkward stages and the 'premium' status just says that a foal looked good on a particular day. What really matters is how Shilhouette looks and rides once she is trained."

After the inspection, Shilhouette's priorities turn to her first shows. To get there she has to be willing to walk into a big box on wheels – the horse trailer! And if everything goes according to Swanson's expectations, she'll do just that—following Fhlora wherever she goes. Just to make sure the trip goes according to plan, Swanson does her best to make the horse trailer look just like another stall by backing it up to the barn door. It just happens to have a ramp in front of it.

In preparation for both shows the mare and filly will be braided, bathed and have their feet trimmed. When she arrives at the show, Shilhouette is not expected to venture out alone. She'll be in the show ring with her mother whether it's foal class where she's evaluated or a mare class where Fhlora is judged. Once again, judges will be evaluate both of them on movement, build and their overall impression.

Swanson is not sure if there will be third show before the big one in September, Dressage at Devon where Shilhouette will face stiff competition from across North America. Reserved seating to see Shilhouette and the Breed and Performance Show at Dressage at Devon is available at <http://dressageatdevon.org/shop/> and general admission tickets will be available at the show grounds only from 9/25/11 to 10/2/11. For additional information, call Ginny Simon at 610-889-2036.

### About Dressage at Devon

*Dressage at Devon ([www.dressageatdevon.org](http://www.dressageatdevon.org)) has been the premier North American Equestrian event since its founding by the Delaware Valley Combined Training Association in 1975, and became a separate organization in 2006. It combines world class dressage competition and the world's largest open breed show with the*

*international Fall Festival show and special activities for the entire family. The six-day event attracts more than 700 horses and 35,000 spectators each year. Dressage at Devon, a 501(c) (3) PA non-profit organization, benefits Thorncroft Therapeutic Horseback Riding Inc., the oldest and largest therapeutic riding program in the nation. Since 1991, Dressage at Devon has raised in excess of \$1,000,000 for Thorncroft.*

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